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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/050,639	01/15/2002	Whonchee Lee	150.00560104	6476

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EXAMINER

DEO, DUY VU NGUYEN

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

1765

DATE MAILED: 01/13/2003

11

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/050,639

Applicant(s)

LEE ET AL.

Examiner

DuyVu n Deo

Art Unit

1765

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 06 December 2002.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 46 and 51-88 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 68-88 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 46, 51-67 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other:

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 46, 51-59 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hayashi et al. (US 5,482,895) and further in review of Berti et al. (US 5,567,651).

Hayashi teaches a method of manufacturing semiconductor devices including steps: providing a substrate assembly comprising a metal nitride region and a cobalt silicide region; selectively etching the metal nitride against the cobalt silicide using a solution comprising peroxide (col. 10, line 21-62). Unlike claimed invention, Hayashi doesn't describe the solution containing a mineral acid to etch the TiN. Berti teaches a method of etching metal nitride and cobalt wherein he teaches removing the cobalt and TiN using an etchant containing a mineral acids such as phosphoric, acetic, and nitric acid and hydrogen peroxide (col. 3, line 50-55). It would have been obvious at the time of the invention for one skill in the art to modify Hayashi's method in light of Berti's teaching using an etchant containing a mineral acid and hydrogen peroxide to remove TiN because, as shown above by Hayashi, the solution of mineral acid and hydrogen peroxide would also remove cobalt. This would be more efficient, economical and saves time during removing process, and reduce contamination since one type of solution is used for removing both cobalt and TiN.

Unlike claimed invention, Hayashi doesn't describe the etch rate of the metal nitride from 50-250 angstrom/min. However, the etch rate of the metal nitride depends on the chemical concentrations, which would be result-effective variables, in the solution in which the concentration would have to be determined through test runs in order to achieve the optimum chemical concentration in the solution to etch the metal nitride with an expectation of a reasonable success. See also *In re Boesch*, 617 F. 2d 272, 205 USPQ 215 (CCPA 1980).

Referring to claim 52, it would have been obvious for one skill in the art to use other mineral acid that is well known to one skill in the art such as HCl to etch the cobalt and TiN with an expectation of a reasonable success.

Referring to claims 53-56, 58 and 59, above prior art doesn't disclose the solutions removing TiN and cobalt having deionized water. It would have been obvious that it is within one skill of the art at the of the invention through routine experimentation to dilute the solution with an appropriate amount of deionized water creating a concentration of mineral acid and peroxide that would optimize the removing process of metal nitride and cobalt against the cobalt silicide with an expectation of a reasonable success.

3. Claims 60-67 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wei et al. (US 5,047,367) and Berti et al. (US 5,567,651).

Wei describes a method of forming a semiconductor device comprising providing a substrate having a metal nitride and a cobalt region and selectively etching cobalt region against the metal nitride region using a solution of mineral acid and water (col. 7, line 53-col. 8 line 5). Unlike claimed invention, Wei doesn't describe the solution containing peroxide. Etching cobalt using a solution having peroxide is well known to one skill in the art as shown here by Berti who

Art Unit: 1765

teaches a method of etching metal nitride and cobalt wherein he teaches removing the cobalt and TiN, using an etchant containing hydrogen peroxide, selectively against cobalt silicide (col. 3, line 50-55). It would be obvious at the time of the invention cobalt can be etched in light of Berti because Berti describes an alternative solution where peroxide is added to etch the cobalt against the cobalt silicide with an expectation of a reasonable success.

Even though, Berti doesn't describes the solution removes cobalt selectively against TiN; however, at the time of the invention, it would be well known to one skill in the art that different material is removed at different rate by a same solution and the etch rate is also depended on the chemical concentration in the solution. Therefore, referring to claims 64-67, the concentration of the chemicals would have to be determined through test runs in order to achieve the optimum chemical concentration in the solution to achieve an optimum etch rate of the cobalt with an expectation of a reasonable success.

Referring to claim 62, it would have been obvious for one skill in the art to use other mineral acid that is well known to one skill in the art such as HCl to etch the cobalt with an expectation of a reasonable success.

Allowable Subject Matter

4. Claims 68-75 remain allowable. Claims 76-88 are allowed since the independent claim 76 includes all the elements of claim 46 and allowable claim 47.

Response to Arguments

5. Applicant's arguments filed 11/6/02 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Art Unit: 1765

Applicant's argument that Hayashi doesn't describe the solution include a mineral acid or Wei doesn't describe etching the cobalt against the TiN using a solution including a mineral acid and peroxide is acknowledged. In response to applicant's arguments against the references individually, one cannot show nonobviousness by attacking references individually where the rejections are based on combinations of references. See *In re Keller*, 642 F.2d 413, 208 USPQ 871 (CCPA 1981); *In re Merck & Co.*, 800 F.2d 1091, 231 USPQ 375 (Fed. Cir. 1986).

Referring to applicant's argument that Berti shows an etch rate for the TiN of 1.66 to 5 angstrom /min based on the fact that Berti discloses a range of thickness of TiN from 50-150 angstroms and the etching time is for 30 min, this is found unpersuasive because Berti doesn't teach that a 30 min time removes 50 or 150 angstroms of TiN. In fact he shows a time for etching cobalt and TiN.

Using DI water to prepare any solution would have been obvious to any scientists during any experiment. Furthermore, any one skilled in the art would have known that the etching rate of any material would depend on the chemical concentrations and their etch rate would have easily determined through routine experimentation, which must be done before any process can be carried out. Therefore, at the time of the invention, one skilled in the art would determine the etch rate of the material and chemical concentrations including mineral acid, peroxide, and water, which would be result-effective variables and to be determined through test runs in order to provide optimum chemical concentrations for the etching with a reasonable expectation of success. See also *In re Boesch*, 617 F. 2d 272, 205 USPQ 215 (CCPA 1980).

Even though Berti describes etching cobalt and TiN using one solution it doesn't mean that the solution can't etch cobalt selectively against TiN. First, they are two different materials,

Art Unit: 1765

therefore, they would have two different etch rates and would have to be etched selectively against each other. Furthermore, since the solution contains the same chemical as that of the claimed invention, it would provide substantially the same etching selectivity as that of claimed invention.

Referring to applicant's argument that there is no motivation to combine Berti and Wei because Wei doesn't etch nitride but only cobalt, please see col. 7, line 63 where Wei describes that TiN is etched. Since etching two materials using one solution is more efficient and economical, it would have been obvious for one skilled in the art to do so at the time of the invention.

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to DuyVu n Deo whose telephone number is 703-305-0515.

DVD

January 10, 2003


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